



Department of
**AGRICULTURE
FISHERIES &
FORESTRY -
AUSTRALIA**



file no: 01/4452
26 February 2002

ANIMAL BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM 2002/07

DRAFT REVISION OF BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE) POLICY

This Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum (ABPM) seeks stakeholder comment on the revised biosecurity policy for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) – Attachment A. We would appreciate comments by 26 April 2002.

The current BSE import policy was adopted in March 1999. Biosecurity Australia has undertaken a review of policy following a reassessment of the BSE risks associated with the importation of cattle and bovine products. The reassessment was initiated when BSE was reported in several Member States of the European Union (EU), previously presumed to be free from BSE, and after it was revealed that possibly infective meat and bone meal had been exported from the United Kingdom to other Member States of the EU and many other countries.

The draft revised policy covers only BSE – the measures address the animal health risks associated with BSE and the importation of various products. Additional conditions and restrictions for other animal health issues may have to be met.

The revised policy does not address the human health risks associated with the importation of *beef and beef products*, specifically produced for human consumption. Policy concerning these products has been developed by the Australia and New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) and the Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC) and is administered through the *Imported Food Control Act 1992*.

The attached revised policy is based on the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) International Animal Health Code 2001 (*Code*) recommendations with some minor modifications to meet Australia's specific situation. The policy differs from the *Code* in the following areas:

Recommended import conditions for cattle

The revised policy includes conditions for import from *BSE free countries and zones* or *BSE provisionally free countries or zones where no indigenous case has been reported* but does not permit importation of cattle from countries or zones where BSE has been reported in indigenous cattle.

Comment: Currently there are no tests available to detect BSE in living animals and post-mortem tests that are available cannot detect BSE during the greater part



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of the incubation period of BSE. Australia is free from BSE and the risk is considered to be too great of importing cattle, or other susceptible bovines, from countries that have reported BSE in indigenous cattle.

Beef (bone-in or deboned) and beef products for pet food (ie not for human consumption)

The *Code* does not include separate recommendations for pet food. It includes recommendations for meat and meat products from cattle from countries or zones of each BSE status. The revised policy includes requirements for beef and beef products not for human consumption, only from *BSE free* and *provisionally free* (both categories) *countries or zones*. These are equivalent to the *Code* recommendations.

Comment: All available evidence indicates that Feline Spongiform Encephalopathy (FSE), a disease of cats, is caused by the consumption of BSE infective agent in affected beef or beef products. Beef and beef products for pet food are not generally subjected to the stringent government controls on sourcing, inspection and quality applied to products for human consumption. It is also frequently difficult to determine exactly which tissues are included in pet food. Consequently, the risks were considered to be too high of importing BSE affected product from *countries or zones with a low or high incidence of BSE*.

Ruminant derived meat meal and feedstuffs containing such meal

The *Code* recommends that these products be imported only from *BSE free countries or zones*. The revised policy requires that such product be only imported from New Zealand except for pet food containing ruminant-derived *meat meal*. This can be imported from *BSE free countries and zones* or *BSE provisionally free countries or zones where no indigenous case has been reported*. The feeding of meat meal is banned in Australia. However, this material poses an unacceptable risk of importing BSE into Australia. Because the production of meat meal is difficult to monitor and audit, it is considered appropriate that the practice since 1966 of issuing permits only to New Zealand provides the appropriate security.

Next Steps

If you wish to comment on the attached draft revised policy your response should be provided by 26 April 2002. Biosecurity Australia will take into account stakeholder comments in finalising this policy review.

I would be grateful if you would pass details of this notice to other interested parties, who should advise Biosecurity Australia if they wish to be included in future communications on this matter. Enquiries should be directed to the officer whose contact details appear below.

Confidentiality

Respondents are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received in response to Animal Quarantine Policy Memoranda will be publicly available and may be listed or referred to in any papers or reports prepared on the subject matter of the Memoranda.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reveal the identity of a respondent unless a request for anonymity accompanies the submission. Where a request for anonymity does not accompany the

submission the respondent will be taken to have consented to the disclosure of his or her identity for the purposes of Information Privacy Principle 11 of the Privacy Act.

The contents of the submission will not be treated as confidential unless they are marked 'confidential' and they are capable of being classified as such in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

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